NAMAKANI PAIO CAMPGROUND
Hawaii Volcanoes National Park
Highway 11
Volcano vicinity
Hawaii County
Hawaii

HABS HI-523
HI-523

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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NAMAKANI PAIO CAMPGROUND

HABS No. HI-523

LOCATION: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Volcano vicinity, Hawaii County, Hawaii

SIGNIFICANCE: The Namakani Paio Campground was constructed as part of Mission 66 efforts to increase campgrounds and camp sites in the National Park system and reflects the design principles of National Park Service campground planning and of Mission 66.

DESCRIPTION: Located off Highway 11 and accessed via a paved road, the Namakani Paio Campground is situated among eucalyptus and ohia trees that form a shaded landscape on the edge of the Kau Desert. There are ten cabin sites, each equipped with a parking space, picnic table, fire pit and grill. Five cabins are located on each side of a comfort station sited in the middle of the campground. The comfort station contains toilets and showers for men and women with a laundry room in the center of the building for use by cabin occupants. The adjacent campground contains a pavilion with a stone fireplace and individual spaces for tent camping.

The wood frame cabins have plywood walls, floors and roofs and are distinctive due to the oversized roof design and unusual pentagon shape. The shingled front gable roof extends past the front of the cabin to cover a concrete slab and also hangs over the cabin's side and rear walls. The side walls of the cabin are slightly angled outward and sit on concrete footings with framing on the exterior, creating a pentagonal shape on the front and rear facades. At the front of each cabin a picnic table sits on the concrete slab; bamboo screens on either side of the slab create a sense of privacy. The compact one-room interiors have exposed framing and are finished with linoleum floors, built-in bunk beds, a double bed and shelving. A louvered vent on the rear wall provides ventilation.

The comfort station is clad in wood siding and has a split wood shake-shingled front gable roof that extends beyond the front wall to cover the entrances to the bathrooms and laundry room. The doors to the bathrooms are screened by lattices extending between the roof supports. Three windows punctuate both the side walls.

The National Park Service's Division of Architecture designed the cabins and comfort station, which were built by day labor. A drawing reveals the cabins were designed to be 12' x 10' and framed with vertical and diagonal beams extending from a roof beam and from the concrete pier foundations. The roofs, walls, and floors of the cabins were to be constructed of plywood. A 6' concrete slab at the front of each cabin had bamboo screens on either end. The dimensions of the comfort station were 24' x 18'-8" with a 4'-4" wide concrete slab at the front. Materials specified included wood siding, louvered windows, and corrugated metal for the roof. The comfort station was designed to contain separate bathroom facilities for men and women

featuring toilets and showers, as well as a laundry with a utility room directly behind in the space between the bathrooms. Bamboo fencing was to be installed on the exterior.[1]

HISTORY: Park personnel and local leaders believed visitation to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park would rise due to increasingly affordable transportation alternatives to the island and a burgeoning population on the island of Oahu. References in the Superintendent Reports to creating a "Low-Cost Cabin Camp" at Namakani Paio reveal the interest in creating an inexpensive campground to encourage visitors to stay overnight. The site chosen was in keeping with Mission 66 principles that emphasized putting new development in minimally invasive areas, and the structures were conceptualized to reflect modern design standards that would also harmonize with the landscape.[2] The inspiration for the design of the cabins and comfort station came from vernacular Hawaiian architecture, particularly as seen in the use of overhanging eaves and bamboo screens. The form of the cabins is also reminiscent of the A-frame, which historian Chad Randl points out enjoyed popularity in the post-war period as a vacation home because it was an easily and inexpensively built structure.[3] The National Park Service had experience designing inexpensive cabins for visitors at Grand Teton National Park and Yosemite National Park as part of Mission 66 efforts to satisfy visitor desires for more motel-like accommodations.[4]

Work on the campground began in January 1963 with the removal of the original picnic shelter. The replacement shelter, largely completed by May 1963, had peeled ohia support posts and native rock fireplaces.[5]

The park began planning the rest of the campground in 1964 with construction starting the following year. Referred to as the "Namakani Paio Permanent Tent Camp Facility" in the Superintendent Report, the project budget was $45,600. The infrastructure had to be put in place first, so a day labor force constructed the access road and parking turnouts, laid water lines from the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory water tank, built the cesspool, and ran a secondary power line from a high voltage power pole on Highway 11 in the spring of 1965.[6]

Work on the cabins began in April 1965 when workers started pouring the footings. The park hired three additional carpenters to assist with the work, but progress was still slow "due to the

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[1] Folder D3215, Cabin Camp-Namakani Paio, 1965, available at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Archives, hereafter cited as HAVO Archives.
[2] December 10, 1964, Superintendent Report, all Superintendent Reports are available at HAVO Archives; Linda Flint McClellan, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 467; Christine Avery, "Namakani Paio Camp," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, January 29, 2008, see especially Section 8. For more information on Mission 66, see Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).
[3] See Chad Randl, *A-frame* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004).
[4] Avery, Section 8, p. 16.
[5] March 11, 1963, April 19, 1963, and May 13, 1963 Superintendent Reports; January 1963, February 1963, and May 1963 Monthly Progress Reports included in Superintendent Reports.
[6] January 10, 1964, December 10, 1964, March 10, 1965, April 12, 1965, and May 3, 1965, Superintendent Reports; October 1964, January 1965, February 1965, March 1965, and April 1965 Monthly Progress Reports included in Superintendent Reports.

labor market shortage of journeyman carpenters."[7] Nevertheless, by June four of the ten cabins had been completed and shingled. With the park's workforce concentrated on the campground construction, the superintendent was able to report the following month that all ten cabins had been framed, closed in, and completed except for painting. The comfort station had also been framed and closed in, so the campground project was deemed to be 80 percent complete. Work had progressed to 95 percent completion in July, according to the Superintendent Report. The remaining work included completing the signage, the interior finishes, and landscaping. By August 1965, the campground had been finished. The park turned over management of the cabin portion of the campground to concessioner Kilauea Volcano House, Ltd., who opened the site to the public in September 3, 1965.[8]

The campground adhered to National Park Service campground design principles, which had been developed in the early 1930s by plant pathologist E.P. Meinecke. Recognizing the earlier practice of siting campsites in meadows or cleared areas in forests resulted in destruction of vegetation, Meinecke developed a campground plan. In the 1932 *A Camp Ground Policy*, published by the U.S. Forest Service, he stated "Camp planning does not end with the setting aside of a camp ground. Instead of permitting the campers to do their own haphazard planning, the ground must be gone over and divided up into individual campsites of legitimate sizes, each one offering approximately as much privacy, shade, and other advantages as the other."[9] He recommended building a one-way road system to provide access to the campsites, setting boundary markers to clearly define space, and equipping each campsite with a parking space (what he termed a "garage spur" that would extend from the main one-way road), a fireplace located in a cleared area, a fixed picnic table, and a tent site.[10] His plan provided the basis for National Park Service campground planning and its influence, along with the design principles of Mission 66, is evident at Namakani Paio Campground.

SOURCES:

Avery, Christine. "Namakani Paio Cabin Camp." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, January 29, 2008.

McClelland, Linda Flint. *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Randl, Chad. *A-frame*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Archives. Folder D3215, Cabin Camp—Namakani Paio, 1965; Superintendent Reports, various years.

HISTORIAN: Justine Christianson, HAER Historian, 2008

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[7] August 10, 1965, Superintendent Report.
[8] June 9, 1965, July 12, 1965, August 10, 1965, September 2, 1965, and September 9, 1965 Superintendent Reports; April 1965, May 1965, June 1965, July 1965, August 1965 Monthly Progress Reports in Superintendent Reports.
[9] E.P. Meinecke, *A Camp Ground Policy* (Ogden, UT: U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1932), p. 10, quoted in McClelland, p. 278.
[10] McClelland, pp. 278-280.